

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.01/157 FOR Despatch #1797

FROM Italy (Kirk) DATED July 22, 1936.
TO NAME 1-1127 ***

REGARDING: Provisional labor regulations for Italian workers in the territory of Addis Ababa. Commissariat for Emigration and Colonization has set up. Wages to be paid for different classes of labor.

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DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.01/171 FOR Despatch #1889

FROM Italy (Kirk) DATED Sept. 16, 1936
TO NAME I-1127 GPO

REGARDING: Labor- Italian East Africa. The Stefani Agency reports that on September 7th the Viceroy reviewed 1,200 Italian workers at Addis Ababa. Every effort is being made to keep the workers contented.

The Stefani Agency reports that on September 7 the Viceroy reviewed 1,200 Italian workers at Addis Ababa. In a speech on this occasion, he informed them that he fully realized the hardships under which they were living and working and promised that general living conditions would be made much easier for everyone as soon as the rainy season ended and communications by land and sea improved. He went on to say that, although he was wearing the uniform of a Marshal of Italy, he was a man of the common people and had known hunger in his early youth, and was, therefore, fraternally speaking to them as soldiers, Fascists, and laborers who knew the "hard law of human toil." He declared that they had the honor of laying the foundation of the Empire by their sacrifices, which he knew they were not doing for themselves but for their children and descendants, who would be the real beneficiaries of the Empire. He added that the Duce was following their work with the greatest interest, and promised to keep him informed of their sacrifices. In conclusion the Viceroy urged them to practice the "two important virtues of the Italian farmer--frugality and economy."

It appears that every effort is being made to keep the workers contented. The Office of Press and Propaganda in Addis Ababa has recently organized a series of variety shows
for

for Italian soldiers and workers in which the men themselves act, and the Fascist Party is planning to open a cinema in the near future. The head of the Fascist organization in Ethiopia, under orders from the Minister of Colonies, is paying daily visits to the workers "to ensure that they enjoy the maximum of comfort possible under present difficult conditions." In this connection the press asserts that "the workers show great understanding of present difficulties, many of which will be overcome just as soon as the rains end."

The newspapers of September 11 report that from January 1935 to August 31, 1936, the Commissariat for Migration and Colonization has transported 131,086 workers to Italian East Africa, and that after subtracting those who have been repatriated upon the expiration of their labor contracts, there are at present 93,669 workers in the conquered territory. In addition, 6,294 former officers and soldiers have found public and private employment in Ethiopia. Of this number about 2,000, who signed contracts with local firms, have been accorded extraordinary leave of absence pending discharge from the army, and about 3,000 others have been incorporated in the "centuries of workers." In the Scioa district nine ex-soldiers have found permanent occupations as merchants, 117 as employees, and 490 as workers, through the assistance of the Delegation of the Commissariat of Migration.

It is further reported that, in conformity with an agreement reached between the Foreign Minister and the Minister of Colonies, the latter has decreed that, from

October

-10-

October 10, 20 per cent of the contingents of workers to be sent to Italian East Africa shall be composed of Italians from abroad, many of whom have lived for a long time in the tropics and have consequently acquired valuable experience for Africa.



LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Addis Ababa, September 10, 1936.

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No. 178

Subject: Marshal Graziani's Speech to Italian Laborers.

DIVISION OF WESTERN
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
OCT 21 1936
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Copy to
To the
Embassy, Rome
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Commercial Office (A-C/O)
To Rome

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
M.B.G. - file
OCT 14 1936
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Sir:

I have the honor to transmit herewith, in trans-
lation, an address which Marshal Graziani made on
September 6, 1936, to a large group of Italian laborers
who had recently arrived in Addis Ababa. The speech
was published in the GIORNALE DI ADDIS ABEBA of Sept-
ember 2, 1936.

As will be seen from the text and tone of the
Marshal's remarks they were intended primarily to pla-
cate the Italian workmen who had been complaining
bitterly of unsatisfactory living conditions. The
Marshal told them that he realized they did not have
the comforts he would like to provide for them, but

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he appealed to them to show the spirit of empire-builders and to help in labors which would benefit posterity if not themselves.

Respectfully yours,


D. Van H. Engert
Minister Resident.

✓
Enclosure:

Speech by Marshal Graziani.

File No. 711/850.4

CVHE/rlh

Copy for American Embassy, Rome.

Translation

Speech by Marshal Graziani, September 6, 1936, to Italian Laborers Recently Arrived in Addis Ababa.

(From the GIORNALE DI ADDIS ABEBA, September 9, 1936).

Workmen!

I should call you "soldiers", because for us you are both, not only as men who have many of them either been in the Great War or in this African war, but also because you are Fascists of the New Italy.

You, soldiers of Italian labor, are contributing with your heavy tasks towards the construction of the Empire, willed by the Duce and created by victory. I know that your work is not at present being performed under conditions of convenience and comfort which we should like to offer you; but I also know that you realize the impelling reasons which prevent our giving you all we should like to give you. This impossibility is a momentary and transitory one; it is due to the special conditions of the troublesome rainy season. It is a bitter condition which affects everybody. The Viceroy of East Africa works nineteen hours out of twenty-four and lives and sleeps in two simple rooms. We are the first builders of the Empire. We have the honor and the sacrifices of those who lay the foundations. As soon as the rainy season is over, as soon as the capacity of the railroad which connects us with the sea has been increased, and as soon as overland connections with Eritrea and Somaliland have been re-established, the general conditions which exist today in East Africa will become less hard for everybody, including yourselves.

Dear workmen: I speak to you from the fullness of my heart. You see me here in the uniform of a Marshal of Italy, but I am proud to tell you that I come directly from the people and that my early youth was very hard, when I even knew what it meant to suffer hunger. I am therefore speaking to you fraternally as one speaks to soldiers and Fascists, as one speaks to workmen who know the arduous necessity of human labor and you are physically and spiritually capable of the sacrifices which the Duce has taught us with his own example. Remember that it is sacrifice and work which gives us our daily bread, and that without work and without sacrifices no Empires are built - not even ramshackle habitations.

I admire your efforts and upon them I place full reliance for the accomplishment of the task of laying the foundations of the Empire; a task entrusted to me, in the name of the King, by the confidence of the Duce. I admire your sacrifices and shall bring them to the

attention

attention of the Duce, who is following step by step our ardent labors. I, you, we all, are not working for ourselves: we are working for our sons and our descendants who will be the real beneficiaries of the Empire. Our task is to create the power to be transmitted to them in order that in the course of years there may be established the Great Italy conceived and launched by the Duce.

Workmen of Fascist Italy:

Long live the King!

Long live the Duce!

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NOTE

SEE 865d.01/176 FOR Despatch #18

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Sept. 30, 1936
TO NAME 1-1127 o r o

REGARDING: Labor- Italian East Africa. Measures taken to improve
working conditions of workers in Italian East Africa.

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Labor.

The press continues to report measures taken to improve the working conditions of Italian laborers in East Africa. According to the Stefani Agency, the Viceroy, having received complaints from some workers that they had not been paid by their employers pending the settlement of claims of these employers against government bodies, gave orders that they be paid immediately, regardless of such claims.

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The Minister of Finance has announced that wages of workers in Italian East Africa will be exempt from payment of the income tax.

The Duce recently sent the Viceroy a telegram ordering that wages of all Italian workers in East Africa be increased one lira per hour from October 1st.

It is reported that the Government General is planning to abolish the stay at Massaua of Italian workmen coming from Italy and transport them directly, from Massaua to Decameré where large modern barracks will be constructed. From this concentration center they will be sent, in accordance with labor requirements, to Dessié, Gondar, Debra Tabor, and Keren, where barracks will also be erected.

According to the latest figures, published on September 26th, the Commissariat for Migration has found employment in Italian East Africa for 8250 Italian veterans of the Italo-Abyssinian war, who are distributed as follows: Eritrea 5590, Italian Somaliland 1799, Harrar 96, and Sciré 775.

865d.504

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.01/196 FOR #47

FROM Italy (Kirk) DATED Oct. 22, 1936
TO NAME 1-1127 070

REGARDING: Establishment of labor regulations for Italian workers
in Italian East Africa in conformity with orders of
the Duce. Reports-

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Voluntary Report

ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE
JAN 11 1937
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EUROPE
JAN 15 1937
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC ADVISER
JAN 18 1937
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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U.S. DEPT. OF
COMMERCE
AND RECORDS

copy to Labor
Commerce
JAN 22 1937

865D. 504/6

RECENT EMBARKATION AT GENOA OF
LABORERS FOR ITALIAN EAST AFRICA

From:

H. F. Ramsay
Hugh F. Ramsay
American Consul

American Consulate General,
Genoa, Italy.

Date of Completion: December 15, 1936

Date of Mailing: December 17, 1936

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JAN 23 1937

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Since the end of November more than four thousand men have been embarked at the port of Genoa to fulfill labor contracts in Ethiopia. The latest departures were as follows:

November 29,	via S. S. TINA I	1836 laborers
December 4,	" " CONTE VERDE	500 "
December 12,	" " NITA	2000 "

Those who embarked on the S. S. CONTE VERDE were recruited entirely from the Ligurian Provinces, while of those who left on December 12 there were five hundred men from the French Riviera and many others from other industrial centers in France such as Calais and Lille.

From information obtained locally it appears that the Italian Government wishes to avoid any possible friction in France between Italian workers employed there and French workmen of an opposing political faith, and is encouraging these men to subscribe to contracts with new labor battalions being sent to Italian East Africa.

The number of men who will be needed has not yet been made public in Genoa, but it is believed that at least one hundred thousand men will be recruited to replace those who have ended their engagement and to supply labor for the new public works, chief among which are the completion of the two roads between Addis Ababa and Dessie and between Dessie and Assab, and the construction of a port with docking facilities in the bay at Assab.

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Transmitted to the Department in quintuplicate
Copy to the Commercial Attache, Rome
Copy to the Consulate General, Naples

Source of Information:
Personal investigation

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.01/247 FOR Despatch #155

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Jan.13,1937
TO NAME 1-1127 020

REGARDING: Labor- Italian East Africa. Official communique regarding the number of Italian workers in Italian East Africa as published in the press of January 8th.

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The following official communiqué regarding the number of Italian workers in Italian East Africa was published in the press on January 8th:

"From January 1935-XIII to December 31, 1936 XV, there have been transported through the Commissariat for Migration and Colonization 167,110 workers to Italian East Africa. Taking into account those who have been repatriated upon the termination of their labor contracts, there are at present in Ethiopia 108,956 Italian workers and more than 15,000 soldiers, who, demobilized in Ethiopia, have requested and obtained permission to remain and work in the Colony."

Compared

Compared with the statistics contained in the official communiqué issued on December 2, 1936, (Embassy's despatch No. 105 of December 2, 1936) the foregoing figures show an increase of 6,202 workers and 1,000 demobilized soldiers in Italian East Africa during the month of December 1936.

The Council of Ministers at its meeting on January 9th approved the draft of a Royal Decree to extend to Italian East Africa the laws in force in Italy regarding private employment and relations between employers and employees.



LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Addis Ababa, January 14, 1937.

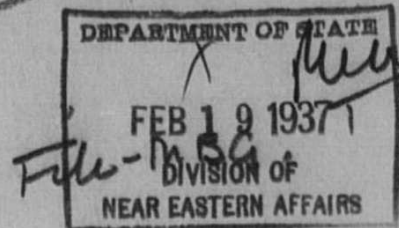
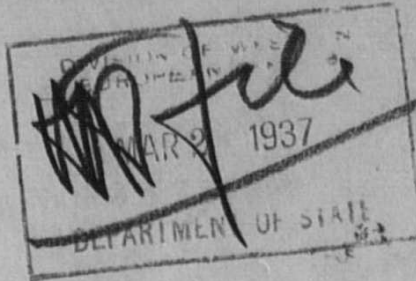
No. 226

Subject: Remittances to Italy from Italian Workmen in
East Africa.

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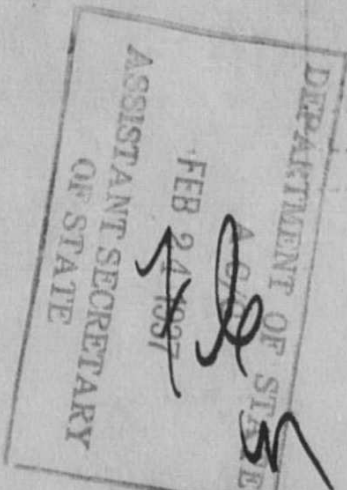
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DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
AND RECORDS



FOR DISTRIBUTION -

To the Field
In U. S. A.



The Honorable

The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that according to the latest Italian statistics there were in Italian East Africa on December 31, 1936, approximately 20,000 demobilized white soldiers employed as laborers, and about 110,000 white laborers imported from Italy. It is believed that over 30,000 of the latter are now in and near Addis Ababa.

The Italians claim that these workmen, and their
predecessors

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predecessors before them, have remitted to their families in Italy the formidable sum of one billion lire during the calendar years 1935 and 1936. The bulk of these remittances has so far come from Eritrea, Somalia, and Addis Ababa. The total for the month of November, 1936, alone is given as over 16 million lire.

Respectfully yours,



Van H. Engert
Minister Resident

File No. 850.4

CVHE/rlh

Copy for Embassy, Rome.

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 865d.02/262 FOR Despatch #233

FROM Italy (Phillips) DATED Feb. 24, 1937
TO NAME 1-1127 o p o

REGARDING: Labor- Italian East Africa. Communique under Addis Ababa
date line in regard to, -.

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Labor.

The following official communiqué under Addis Ababa date line was published in the press on February 18th:

"As regards the definitive organization of the workers of the Empire, the Inspector of Labor communicates that all workers will be organized in units of the Militia. Each

'Government'

- 10 -

'Government' will have a legion commanded by a consul (colonel). At the Government General there will be established a headquarters for the group of legions of workers in Italian East Africa, under the command of a Consul General. As regards the military, the commander will be under the troop headquarters of the Government General. The legions are now being organized."

Central File: Decimal File 865D.504, Internal Affairs Of States, Economic Matters., Italian East Africa, Labor., July 22, 1936 - February 24, 1937. July 22, 1936 - February 24, 1937. MS European Colonialism in the Early 20th Century. National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, link.gale.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FSC5109727405%2FGDSC%3Fu%3Domni%26sid%3Dbookmark-GDSC. Accessed 18 June 2025.